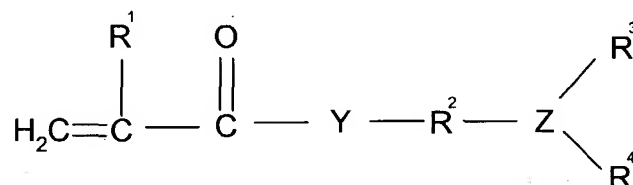


Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A polymer comprising quaternary ammonium groups and/or quaternary phosphonium groups bound to the backbone of the polymer, said quaternary ammonium groups and/or quaternary phosphonium groups being neutralised by counter-ions, characterised in that the counter-ions consist of the anionic residue of an acid having an aliphatic, aromatic, or alkaryl hydrocarbon group comprising 6 or more carbon atoms.
2. (Original) Process for the preparation of a polymer according to claim 1, comprising the steps of:
 - Quaternisation of an amine- or phosphine-functional monomer of formula (I):
wherein Y is O or NH, Z is N or P, R¹ is a hydrogen atom or a C₁-C₄ alkyl



- group, R² is a C₂ or a C₃-C₁₂ alkylene group, R³ and R⁴ independently represent a C₁-C₆ alkylene group or an optionally substituted phenyl group.
- Replacement of the counter-ion of the quaternised ammonium or phosphonium monomer by a carboxylate group derived from an acid having an aliphatic, aromatic, or alkaryl hydrocarbon group comprising 6 or more carbon atoms.
 - Polymerisation of at least one type of long-chain acid-capped quaternary ammonium monomer and/or at least one type of long-chain, acid-capped quaternary phosphonium-functional monomer.
3. (Canceled) Use in anti-fouling coating compositions of a polymer comprising quaternary ammonium and/or quaternary phosphonium groups bound to the backbone of the polymer, said quaternary ammonium groups and/or quaternary

phosphonium groups being neutralised by counter-ions, characterised in that the counter-ions consist of the anionic residue of an acid having an aliphatic, aromatic, or alkaryl hydrocarbon group comprising 6 or more carbon atoms.

4. (Original) Anti-fouling coating compositions comprising an ingredient having marine biocidal properties and a polymer comprising quaternary ammonium and/or quaternary phosphonium groups bound to the backbone of the polymer, said quaternary ammonium groups and/or quaternary phosphonium groups being neutralised by counter-ions, characterised in that the counter-ions consist of the anionic residue of an acid having an aliphatic, aromatic, or alkaryl hydrocarbon group comprising 6 or more carbon atoms.
5. (Original) Coating composition according to claim 4, characterised in that the counter-ions comprise 6 to 50 carbon atoms.
6. (Currently Amended) Coating composition according to claim 4 ~~or 5~~, characterised in that the coating composition additionally comprises a rosin material.
7. (Original) Coating composition according to claim 6, characterised in that the coating composition has a binder comprising a blend of a rosin material and an auxiliary film-forming resin in a weight ratio of 20:80 to 95:5, the auxiliary film-forming resin comprising 20-100% by weight of a quaternary ammonium- and/or quaternary phosphonium-functional film-forming polymer (A), the quaternised groups of which are blocked by groups capable of hydrolysing, dissociating or exchanging with seawater species to leave a polymer soluble in seawater, the blocking groups being anionic residues of acids having an aliphatic, aromatic, or alkaryl hydrocarbon group comprising 6 or more carbon atoms, and 80-20% of a non-hydrolysing, water-insoluble film-forming polymer (B).
8. (Original) Coating composition according to claim 7, characterised in that the binder comprises a blend of the rosin material and the auxiliary film-forming resin in a weight ratio of 55:45 to 80:20.

9. (Currently Amended) Coating composition according to claim 7—~~or 8~~, characterised in that the auxiliary film-forming resin comprises 30-90% by weight of the film-forming polymer (A) capable of hydrolysing or dissociating to a polymer soluble in sea water and 70-10% by weight of the non-hydrolysing, water-insoluble film-forming polymer (B).
10. (Currently Amended) Coating composition according to ~~any one of claims 4 to 9~~ claim 4, characterised in that the non-hydrolysing, water-insoluble film-forming polymer (B) is an acrylate ester polymer or a vinyl ether polymer.
11. (Currently Amended) Coating composition according to ~~any one of claims 4 to 10~~ claim 4, characterised in that the binder includes a non-polymeric plasticiser present at up to 50% by weight based on the total binder polymer.
12. (Currently Amended) Use Method of a coating ~~composition according to any one of claims 4 to 11~~ for protection of man-made structures immersed in water such as boat hulls, buoys, drilling platforms, oil production rigs, and pipes, comprising coating said structures with the composition of claim 4.